



THE STUDY OF ERRORS IN THAI WRITING OF FOREIGN STUDENTS IN CHIANG MAI

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ABSTRACT

This paper presented here is an attempt to discuss potential problems foreign Students living in Chiang Mai face in the quest of Learning Thai for specific purposes. Chiang Mai, is a northernmost province of Thailand where a lot foreign students have been pursuing many academic programs at public and private universities. The necessity of Learning Thai for foreign Students is a pre requisite criteria before taking on major study area. These students, however, are often seen lacking communication art skills even after their completion of Thai- Language course. The paper thus presents Errors in Thai Writing of foreign Students and put forth recommendations as solutions.

INTRODUCTION:

Writing is one of the crucial skills of language communication as listening, speaking and reading are.

However, with the limitation of sending messages through written language, this makes it difficult. A writing communicator must rely on his experience, knowledge accumulation, writing skills, regular practices, so that he will be able to write efficiently and communicate with the receiver in accordance with the objectives. Although there are various limitations in writing, sending messages through writing is really popular due to the fact that it can be recorded as evidence and widely reused.

In the no-frontier communication era at present, the study of a second language is a must. Thai language is one of the world languages which people are interested in studying especially the Chinese. Due to their interests, there are many of both government and private educational institutions offer the Thai curricular courses to support their needs, either in a format of a Bachelor's program or a short course training program and the statistical numbers of Chinese students are ascending. Chiang Mai University and Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand as an educational institution that responds to the offering of Thai courses o foreigners, so the number of Chinese institutions have continuously sent their students to attend the language and culture training with us, and Guangxi Vocational College is one of them.

Nevertheless, teaching Thai to foreigners, it is required that the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing must be taught simultaneously. Listening and reading skills are message receiving skills which has less limitations, and foreign students can easily manage it. Yet the speaking and writing skills are message sending skills with practically more difficulty especially the writing skill which has high limitations of message transfer.

The writing skill, a message sending skill, has plenty of limitations. A writer will write accurately or not, many rules must be considered well, no matter if it is correct spelling, meaningful word choice, and grammatically accurate sentence choice. Particularly foreigners who have never used Thai as a native language but are beginners in Thai language at college where they have brief study time, and it results in lots of writing errors for communication. Errors found include spelling, the use of wrong word/s or words with wrong meanings, writing of incomplete sentences, writing sentences with flawed meaning which all are due to insufficiency of writing skill study, leading to Chinese students having more errors in writing skill than other language skills.

From a preliminary survey, it was found that students who had studied Thai grammar in China are able to communicate in beginner's writing level and most found errors are spelling, wrong written alphabets. When students begin to misspell words, this will cause them the imperfect uses of words, sentences, idioms and punctuation marks eventually.

It is thus an interesting issue to study about errors in Thai writing of Chinese students who are foreigners studying Thai as a second language, especially those coming for a training in a special course of Thai language and culture for communication for foreigners, who have a little background of Thai language. This study will pave way for the writing skill development of every Thai course in the curriculum designed for Chinese students in the future.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

1. To investigate the errors in Thai writing of Chinese students, who stay and

study in Chiang Mai, Thailand

2. To apply the findings as a blueprint for designing the curriculum of every Thai course with an emphasis on development of more efficient writing skill.

RESEARCH METHOD:

1. Population:

Diaries of eleven Chinese students each with two issues of diary writing totaling of 20 diary writing pieces written during the five months of August to December 2019.

2. Research Tool:

Analysis template for six features of writing errors of Chinese students

3. Data collection:

1. Survey related texts, articles and researches for the research approach.
2. Collect the data from the diary writings of August to December 2019, written by eleven Chinese students submitting 2 entries of the diary writings; thus totaled in 20 entries.
3. Set the criteria for error analysis in Thai writing of Chinese students as follow:
 - 3.1 Criteria for error analysis in Thai writing including:
 - 3.1.1 Errors in spelling
 - 3.1.2 Errors in word choice
 - 3.1.3 Errors in sentence usage
 - 3.1.4 Errors in expression usage
 - 3.1.5 Errors in numeral usage
 - 3.1.6 Errors in punctuation and punctuation mark usage
4. Conclusion and discussion in descriptive analysis formats

DATA ANALYSIS:

After the data collection, the researcher did the analysis based on the criteria set for, recorded the results in data collection table, and consequently drew the conclusions and made the descriptive discussions of these findings.

RESEARCH CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION:

1. Research conclusions:

Findings of error analysis in Thai writing of Chinese students, who stay and study in Chiang Mai, Thailand from the diary written during the study time in Thailand. The error features found are:

1.1 Errors in word spelling:

Most of the errors are the misuse of consonants, vowels and tone marks including the missing of some consonants.

- 1.1.1 Errors in spelling include both a single and a cluster of the initial

and final consonants.

- 1.1.2 Errors in vowel usage of both single and compound vowels.
- 1.1.3 Errors in tone mark usage especially misuse and misplace of the tone marks.
- 1.1.4 Errors in consonant omitting either in initial or final position.

1.2 Errors in word choices:

- 1.2.1 Misuse of nouns
- 1.2.2 Misuse of verbs
- 1.2.3 Misuse of prepositions
- 1.2.4 Misuse of conjunctions
- 1.2.5 Misuse of noun classifiers
- 1.2.6 Misuse of words of different levels
- 1.2.7 Misuse of sentence word orders
- 1.2.8 Usage of transliterated words for Thai words

1.3 Errors in sentence usage:

- 1.3.1 Usage of unclear sentences
- 1.3.2 Usage of incomplete sentences
- 1.3.3 Usage of incorrect modifiers in sentences

1.4 Errors in idiom or idiomatic expression usage:

An idiom is a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words, but the students translated some of some idioms from their mother tongue or English language for Thai language usage causing errors in their Thai writing.

1.5 Errors in numerical usage:

Wrongly written Thai numerical usage occurred all the time.

1.6 Errors in punctuation and punctuation mark usage:

Chinese students wrote the paragraph in the diary entry without leaving a space between sentences. Moreover, they sometimes left a space in a wrong position or used some incorrect punctuation marks as well.

RESEARCH DISCUSSION:

The writing skill poses a number of limitations which led to the inability to communicate through Thai writing as well as expected, and the Chinese students had such a short period of study time, so their capability in writing was not sufficient. Regardless of misspelling of words, misusing of words or sentences, errors in idiom or idiomatic expression usage, errors in numerical usage, and errors in punctuation and punctuation mark usage, these are the difficulties for students who take Thai language as the second language to confront due to the fact that these features are fundamental problems as stated by Chanika Khamput (2002, abstract.) studying Thai usage of the fourth year Chinese students majoring in Thai language at Yunnan Ethnic Institution, Republic of China. It was found that errors in Thai writing were: misspelling of initial consonant ranked first, next were misspelling of the final consonants, misspelling of vowels both short and long ones and interchangeably usage of vowels and even misuse of single or compound vowels. For sentence usage, it revealed that the misuse of word choice according to the part of speech and the meaning. There were also the use of excessive words, omitted words and wrong ordering of words in sentences. However, the errors were also found among the Thai students who made similar errors as well as foreign students did. In the studying errors in Thai academic writing of the Thai major fourth year students at Burapa University found that the errors made by Thai students were misspelling of words, misuse of words, errors in sentence writing and in paragraph writing, errors in punctuation mark and numerical usage.

Moreover, another influence affecting the writing ability of foreign students was the influence of the first language over the second language, or the influence of the mother tongue, in other words, Chinese language influenced the Thai writing which is their second language, in accordance with Chanika Khamput (2002:122) statement, "The function of writing words in a sentence, it was found that errors were related to first language influence transferred to the second language; the positions of a direct object and the indirect object in Chinese language differ from those of Thai language, that is, in Thai a direct object always proceeds an indirect object while in Chinese an indirect object must come prior to a direct one." Thus, when Chinese students had to write a sentence with a direct object and an indirect object, they did it as they must do in Chinese.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

1. Findings of the research can be applied for designing exercises or text books to correct errors Chinese students often make.
2. Studies of errors in Thai writing of Chinese students from another college should be done and made used of in order to develop a more efficient teaching curriculum of Thai Language.
3. There should be studies of errors of Chinese students in Thai reading courses, so the finding can be applied for the development of the Thai curriculum courses focusing on the reading skill.

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